issue No.1 January 2004

# Preserving Our Open Lands Fremont Open Space Initiative

#### Why Preserve Open Space?

According to the 2000 Census, New Hampshire is the fastest growing state in the northeast, losing 12,000 to 15,000 acres of open space per year due to development. The initiative to protect our remaining open spaces has already taken root in many southern New Hampshire communities and it has now come to Fremont

## Open Space Benefits: The importance of open space to provide tax relief:

Between 1990 and 2000, 46,000 new homes were constructed in New Hampshire. Over half of those houses were clustered in Rockingham and Hillsborough counties. Experience has proven that preserving tracts of open land through zoning, conservation easements, and land acquisition can lower the rate of future tax increases. A study of 234 New Hampshire towns by the NH Wildlife Federation and the Society for the Protection of NH Forests<sup>1</sup> documented that taxes are considerably higher in communities with more taxable property. Residential development creates tremendous demands upon towns and results in increased property taxes to cover the cost of new or enlarged schools; increased police and fire protection; and construction and maintenance of new roads and sidewalks.

<sup>1</sup>Appears in The New Hampshire Business Review, May 8-21, 1998

## The importance of open space for preserving community character:

Communities adjacent to major traffic corridors such as routes 101 and 125 are under siege from commercial sprawl and a rate of residential development that undermines our quality of life. Many of us are alarmed by the rate at which open

space in Fremont is being subdivided and developed. The irony that exists is that the very things that attract people to our town, the recreational opportunities, scenic views, open space and community character, are the things that are threatened by overdevelopment. **Providing current landowners an alternative to development** will help to preserve open space, recreational woodlands and family farms.

## The importance of open space to water protection:

Development does more than threaten the quality and rural character of our community. Increased housing also threatens Fremont's precious aquifers. Open space protects our drinking water. The health of our streams, ponds, and groundwater depends upon how the surrounding lands are used. Although Fremont's Spruce Swamp has been protected, the uplands around the swamp can still be developed. This will threaten our water supply. Since Fremont does not have municipal water, our well water source is critical. *Now* is the time to set aside land to help ensure safe and adequate water for the future.

## The importance of open space for wildlife:

Large areas of habitat are vital to protect native species such as wild turkey and deer. Open space protection will conserve special habitats.

What have other towns done?

At town meetings all around Rockingham County, neighboring communities including Newfields, Chester, Stratham, Brentwood, Durham, Newmarket, East Kingston, Exeter and Rye have funded programs to protect open space totaling over 28 million dollars. Now is the time for the residents of Fremont to get involved. The choice is yours; open space or subdivision, rural community or bedroom community suburb. Other communities have spoken. Now it is our turn.



#### Giving landowners an alternative!

This is a **completely voluntary** program. This initiative gives willing landowners the tools and the opportunity to sell their development rights on their property. This can provide income to the property owners, allow them to retain ownership and permanently protect open space. We feel that most land owners in Fremont if given an alternative to selling to a developer, will choose open space. This option benefits both the landowners and Fremont's residents.

**To find out more** please visit our display during the Presidential Primary on January 27<sup>th</sup> or attend the bond hearing on February 9th at 7:00 pm in the library.

## The Decision is Yours!

### Learn more about the Open Space Initiative

Visit our Informational Booth January 27<sup>th</sup> during Primary Voting Day Come to the Bond Hearing February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Library Come to our meetings every Tuesday Evening at 7:00 pm at Town Hall Visit the Town Website at http://www.fremont.nh.gov



Fremont Open Space Committee Newsletter c/o Fremont Conservation Commission PO Box 120 Fremont, NH 03044-0120 Presorted Standard US POSTAGE PAID Fremont NH 03044 Permit NO. 5



#### For more information contact:

Janice O'Brien j-obrien@comcast.net 679-5545

Gina Surrette gsurrette@hotmail.com

Kenn Jones <u>kejones@enterasys.com</u> 679-5573

RESIDENT OR BOXHOLDER

FREMONT NH 03044